



Pastor Kidane Gebremeskel

Country : Eritrea

On January 21 2005 three pastors of the Full Gospel Church in Asmara were arrested. Pastor Kidane Gebremeskel, Pastor Abraham Belay and Pastor Faniel Mihreteab were initially detained at the Wongel Mermera investigation centre in central Asmara. In September 2005 almost nine months after their initial detention Pastor Gebremeskel and Pastor Mihreteab were sentenced to three years and two years respectively for their Christian activities at a court hearing conducted by a committee of military commanders. It is not known if they were actually present at this trial. Both men were then transferred to Sembel Prison, Eritrea's largest prison on the outskirts of Asmara. Both of the pastors are married with young families.

In April 2006 Pastor Abraham Belay was released. Abraham had been transferred to the Sawa Military Training Centre to do his obligatory military service. However, medical examiners in Sawa declared him to be in such bad health that he was unfit for military service. In an email, Abraham wrote, *'God has been faithful to me for the last fourteen months; He sustained me and delivered me. I count it all joy.'*

We thank God for the release of Pastor Abraham, but ask that you continue to pray for the release of his two colleagues. The location and condition of these men together with hundreds of other Christians who languish in Eritrean prisons remains unclear and a cause for concern. Although many have been incarcerated for months or even years, none have been charged officially or given access to judicial process.

During the first week of 2007, police and military

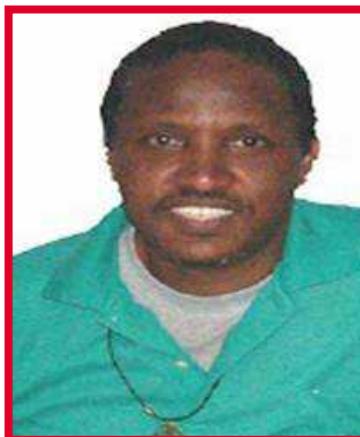
Through our international network of missions, Release International serves persecuted Christians in 30 countries around the world by supporting pastors and Christian prisoners, and their families; supplying Christian literature and Bibles; and working for justice.

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EMAIL ALERT
for prayer & action

FEBRUARY 2007



authorities jailed 68 Christians in three separate operations. These new arrests of both Protestant evangelicals and Orthodox renewal movement church members marked the Eritrean government's widening crackdown against Christians whose faith and freedom to worship have now been severely restricted for almost five years. In one of the three operations, security police in the southern port city of Assab arrested twenty five believers from their homes, workplaces and schools. All twenty five prisoners were incarcerated at the Wi'a Military Camp and subjected to harsh pressures to recant their faith. Seven of the twenty five prisoners are women.

PLEASE PRAY

- ▶ Pray for the release of all Eritrean Christians who are imprisoned because of their loyalty to Christ
- ▶ Pray that those who are being tortured for their faith will be strengthened and delivered by the Lord
- ▶ Pray for Pastor Gebremeskel, for his wife and two children that God will give them wisdom, faith, peace and joy

'But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him'
Acts 12:5



THE VOICE OF THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Romans 12:14 'Bless those that persecute you'

The Eritrean authorities have not officially acknowledged Pastor Kidane Gebremeskel's detention so it is not possible to send greeting cards or letters to him. Instead, please send a letter to the Eritrean authorities. This will help ensure that the Eritrean Government is aware of the international concern about the imprisonment of Christians in that nation. On the advice of our partners, it is inappropriate at this time to write to, or to name, individuals when writing to the Eritrean authorities. In the past this has led to prisoners being relocated to a more isolated and a more difficult situation.

Please do not mention Release International, or advance your political opinion or include anything which could be insulting to the authorities. Please do not name individual prisoners.

A sample letter is given below.

Dear [title],

I am deeply concerned for the nation of Eritrea at this time and in particular for the situation where more than 2000 Christians have been unjustly imprisoned. Where a prisoner is detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of religion, which is guaranteed in the Eritrean Constitution, I request that they be released unconditionally.

In the interim, may I urge you to ensure that that all such prisoners are given access to their families, legal advice **and any medical treatment required.**

Please send your letter to:

His Excellency Isaias Afewerki
President of the State of Eritrea
Office of the President
P O Box 257, Asmara, Eritrea
Fax: + 2911 125123
Salutation: Your Excellency

Ms Fawzia Hashim
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
P O Box 241
Asmara, Eritrea
Salutation: Dear Minister

Commissioner of Prisons
Brigadier General
Ghirmay Mehari
Department of Penitentiary Institutions
Ministry of Internal Affairs
PO Box 712
Asmara, Eritrea
Salutation: Dear Commissioner